

JFK Assassination System
Identification Form

Date: 10/21/20

Agency Information

AGENCY : HSCA
RECORD NUMBER : 180-10110-10145

RECORD SERIES : SECURITY CLASSIFIED FILES

AGENCY FILE NUMBER : JFK-171

Document Information

ORIGINATOR : HSCA
FROM :
TO :

TITLE :

DATE : 09/26/1978
PAGES : 3SUBJECTS :
CIA, ADMINISTRATIONDOCUMENT TYPE : OUTSIDE CONTACT REPORT
CLASSIFICATION : Unclassified
RESTRICTIONS : 1A
CURRENT STATUS : Redact
DATE OF LAST REVIEW : 06/13/1997

OPENING CRITERIA :

COMMENTS : Box 5.

COMMITTEE SENSITIVE

KENNEDY

OUTSIDE CONTACT REPORT

014168

DATE 9/26/78 TIME 10:00

I. Identifying Information:

Name DONALD ~~DESSELVA~~ ~~DESSELVA~~ Telephone _____
Address Former employee of Soviet Russia Division of CIA

Type of Contact: Telephone
X Person

II. Summary of Contact:

Together with Ken Klein I interviewed Mr. Deselmya about his work in the SR Division and specifically his work with Golitsin. Deselmya explained that in 1962 and 1963 he was employed as an administrative aide to work at Golitsin's home when Golitsin first defected. Deselmya's work involved assisting Golitsin in getting access to printed material and publications. He said G was not aware that Deselmya had an Agency connection, because G had not liked it when he learned that Deselmya's predecessor was in fact employed by the CIA. However, Deselmya reported back to the Agency while covering G and was privy to the reports on G's debriefing sessions.

Deselmya said that in one debriefing report he read G had told the CIA that the Soviets were developing a "contingency plan" for the assassination of Richard Nixon if Nixon were elected president. The plan was in existence prior to the 1960 election. Deselmya said he could remember no details about the plan and did not know what other specifics G had provided. He said this debriefing info was corroborated by Col. Lennie Wagner, Deselmya's case officer, who also told him G had given information about the existence of such assassination plans.

Deselmya said he was prompted in part to come forth to the Committee with this information because of his belief that the recent testimony by John Hart was not an accurate characterization of G or the information he provided to the CIA. He gave his opinion that G was remarkably knowledgeable about Soviet affairs, probably more so than any other KGB defector the CIA had received.

III. Recommended Follow-up (if any):

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He said G had an excellent memory and also that none of the information ever provided by G had been disproven. He said much of it was so intricate and involved that it was only years later that the full impact of what he had reported began being known.

Deselyna explained that G's brief stay with the British was brought on by the deteriorating relations with his CIA handlers, and not through G's "paranoia." Deselyna said G had angered and frustrated some of the higher-ups at the agency because he often went over their heads. Deselyna gave as an example of the deteriorating trust that it was known that when the CIA received word that the KGB knew G was living in the Washington area and were likely to try to kill him, the CIA filtered the word down to G's babysitters that if the KGB tried a hit, the CIA men were not to stand in the way.

Deselyna said that another position he held in the SR Division was in Foreign Documents; his job was to maintain files on all of the technical and scientific industries in the USSR and to translate scientific and technical materials from Russian to English. In that capacity he was routed a contact form in July or August 1962 which related that a former Marine Corps officer - Deselyna thought the rank was either "Cpt." or "Cpl." - was redefining to the U.S. with his family. It said the defector had lived in Minsk and worked in a radio factory there. The report contained information provided by the defector about the size of the Minsk plant, number of employees, type of work, etc. He said the Agency also had other information on that Minsk plant from the Industrial Registry Office at the agency; he said it is possible this contact report on the Minsk information could be located there. He said the contact reports often do not contain the name of the individual being contacted, and this one did not. He said the origin of the memo was the New York contacts office. He said that meant either that it originated from a contact in New York, or quite possibly that it had been pouched over by the American Embassy in Moscow. He said the memo did not contain any type of cryptonym or codes which might indicate a particular project or interest.

Deselyna said he testified about this contact memo before the Senate Intelligence Committee in 1975. He said he thought the Senate had not been able to confirm this information. He said also that he had heard in 1975 about a memo in which some CIA employee discussed the possibility of debriefing Oswald upon his return to the U.S. Deselyna suggested that we contact the writer of that memo to determine if he knows about this contact report. (NOTE: We did not inform Deselyna that we have interviewed the man who wrote that memo.)

Deselyna said other persons he worked with in the SR Division should be able to confirm the substance of G's debriefing reports; it should be contained in the initial debriefing reports. He identified John Mc Mann, a Mr. Whitehead, who may be retired, a man named Polling and Howard Osborne. He said he would not mind it if we mentioned his name to the CIA or Golitsin when we follow-up on this. He said G knew him as Donald Denison.

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I asked Deselnya if he knew the name Talbot Bielefeldt; Bielefeldt has been identified as a friend of Ruth Paine whom Ruth's mother contacted when they were in Washington, D.C. in 1964 to testify before the Warren Commission. Deselnya said Bielefeldt was the head of the Soviet branch of the Foreign Documents Division when he was there. He said he did not believe Bielefeldt had any operational activities at that time, but that he did not know what type of work Bielefeldt moved to next. He said the Foreign Documents Division did not actually run any operations that he knew of. He said if they ever received any reports which reflected any operations or sources, that fact was always disguised or the source of the document would be dummied to hide the real interest.

We asked why G would not have told us this story about the Soviet plan to possibly assassinate Nixon when we interviewed G. Deselnya said he did not know why, but that it is possible he was "warned off" of discussing certain areas by the Agency, although Deselnya said he did not know what G's present relationship with the CIA was.

Possible follow-up:

1. Reinterview Golitsin about the Nixon plan
2. Get access to the debriefing reports on G which mention the plan or cover the initial time periods he was being debriefed
3. Interview and/or depose the responsible CIA officials to determine
a) what action was taken on this information; b) whether this information was disseminated to the Warren Commission
4. Locate through the Industrial Registry or the Foreign Documents Division the memo about the debriefing of the defector
(NOTE: Casasin said also that he thought a file or index was maintained on the industries in Minsk; he thought the information would have been kept in the Office of Research and Reports; I do not believe it still exists, but Ted says info from that old office has been farmed out to several other components)
5. Interview and/or depose the responsible CIA officials on
a) the location of this memo; b) whether it was ever disseminated to the Warren Commission; c) what action was ever taken on it
6. Attempt to locate the individuals who conducted the debriefing

Team 5 (CIA) has also spoken with Deselnya.